

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ROME 19685 021740Z

14
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

TRSE-00 SAJ-01 /067 W
----- 088755

R 021615Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1552
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 19685

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: DE CAROLIS AND THE PROBLEM OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT RIGHT

SUMMARY: CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT (DC) LEADERS AND THE MEDIA ALIKE HAVE SPENT THE LAST WEEK ATTACKING MASSIMO DE CAROLIS, MILAN'S YOUNG DC LEADER WHO HAS BECOME THE PARTY'S LEADING EXPONENT OF COMBATIVE ANTI-COMMUNISM AND ECONOMIC CONSERVATISM. THE CLAMOR STEMS FROM AN INTEMPERATE NEWSPAPER INTERVIEW IN WHICH DE CAROLIS SEEMED TO ADVOCATE A HARSH AND POSSIBLY VIOLENT CONFRONTATION WITH THE PCI IN THE NEAR FUTURE. IN EXAMINING THE DC CAROLIS PHENOMENON, WE SUGGEST THAT THE EXAGGERATED PARTY AND MEDIA REACTION IS INDICATIVE OF AN INCREASINGLY INTOLERANT POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE THAT NO LONGER ALLOWS SPACE FOR ANYONE WHO CLEARLY IDENTIFIES HIMSELF AS RIGHT OF CENTER. END SUMMARY.

1. PAESE SERA CALLED HIM A "STRAUSS IN MILAN". FOR A WEEK, UNITA RAN AN ALMOST DAILY COMMENTARY WARNING AGAINST THE "DESTRUCTIVE MADNESS" OF THE "BLOODY CLASH MANIAC." "ISOLATE HIM*" REJOINED THE PSI'S AVANTI. THE OBJECT OF THESE EMOTIONAL ATTACKES WAS MASSIMO DE CAROLIS, A 37 YEAR-OLD DEPUTY FROM MILAN WHO ALMOST OVERNIGHT HAS BECOME THE SPOKESMAN AND SYMBOL OF THE DC'S RIGHT-WING.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ROME 19685 021740Z

2. ATTACKS BY THE LEFT ON A DC POLITICIAN WHO MAKES VISCERAL ANTI-COMMUNISM HIS TRADEMARK ARE IDEOLOGICALLY PREDICTABLE. MORE SIGNIFICANT AND SURPRISING, HOWEVER, IS THE FACT THAT DE CAROLIS MANAGED TO PROVOKE ONLY A SLIGHTLY LESS RABID REACTION FROM HIS OWN PARTY. TWELVE DC LEFT DEPUTIES CALLED FOR DE CAROLIS' SUSPENSION. EVEN CENTER-RIGHT LEADERS SUCH AS PICCOLI AND FANFANI FELT THAT DE CAROLIS HAD GONE TOO FAR. ZACCAGNINI AND FORLANI BOTH WARNED AGAINST STATEMENTS THAT "PROVOKED FRACTURES BETWEEN SOCIETY AND THE STATE." WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE YOUNG TURIN DEPUTY, ROSSI DE MONTELLERA, VIRTUALLY EVERY DC POLITICIAN SCRAMBLED TO DISOWN THE POPULAR MILAN LEADER.

3. WHAT HAD DE CAROLIS DONE TO EARN SUCH UNIVERSAL CONDEMNATION? HIS VISION OF A MORE MODERN, TECHNICALLY-ORIENTED PARTY OF BROAD PUBLIC PARTICIPATION DIFFERS LITTLE FROM THAT OF UMBERTO AGNELLI AND OTHER DC REFORMISTS. THE SAME KIND OF STRONG ANTI-COMMUNISM IS NOT CRITICIZED IN OTHER DC LEADERS. RATHER, IT WAS DE CAROLIS' APPARENT CALL FOR AN EARLY AND POSSIBLY VIOLENT CONFRONTATION WITH THE PCI THAT HAD EVERYONE IN A FUROR.

4. IN A WIDELY QUOTED INTERVIEW NOV. 23 WITH THE LEFTIST DAILY, LA REPUBBLICA, DE CAROLIS SPOKE OF THE NEED TO REFASHION A TOUGH, AGGRESSIVE DC, PATTERNED AFTER THE PCI'S DISCIPLINED CADRES AND CAPABLE OF CONDUCTING A ROUGH POLITICAL CONFRONTATION WITH THE PCI "IN THE NOT DISTANT FUTURE." HE CRITICIZED ZACCAGNINI AND OTHER PARTY LEADERS AS INCAPABLE OF CONDUCTING THIS STRUGGLE. MAKING AMPLY USE OF MILITARY IMAGERY AND REFERENCES TO VIETNAM, DE CAROLIS SAID THAT THE TIME HAS PERHAPS COME FOR THE DC TO ADOPT KUTUSOV'S SCORCHED EARTH STRATEGY. "IF THE COMMUNISTS WANT TO ENTER, LET THEM COME, BUT THEY WILL FIND EVERYTHING BURNED."

5. DE CAROLIS' UNFORTUNATE CHOICE OF LANGUAGE WAS PRETTY HEADY STUFF. THE DC COULD NOT LET IT GO UNANSWERED. EVEN DE CAROLIS' GREATEST CHAMPION (IL GIORNALE'S INDO MANTANELLI) ASSERTED THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER HAD DE CAROLIS NOT GIVEN THAT INTERVIEW. DE CAROLIS HIMSELF SUBSEQUENTLY DENIED THAT HE ADVOCATED A PHYSICAL CLASH OR SUPPORTED EARLY ELECTIONS. ALTHOUGH THE CLAMOR IN THE MEDIA CONTINUES, COOLER HEADS ARE BEGINNING TO PREVAIL IN THE DC, SEEKING TO DOWNPLAY THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE "DE CAROLIS AFFAIR." INTERESTINGLY, EVEN THE PCI'S PAJETTA WARNED AGAINST CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ROME 19685 021740Z

EXAGGERATING DE CAROLIS' SIGNIFICANCE, POSSIBLY FEARING A BACKLASH REACTION WHICH COULD ENHANCE DE CAROLIS' STATUE.

6. ALLOWING THAT DE CAROLIS SAID SOME INTEMPERATE (AND, WE BELIEVE, DISQUIETING) THINGS, WE ARE NONETHELESS STRUCK BY THE DISPROPORTIONATE AND EXAGGERATED ATTENTION GIVEN TO HIS STATEMENTS. TO BE SURE, DE CAROLIS IS ALREADY A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH IN LOMBARDY AND OTHER AREAS OF THE INDUSTRIAL NORTH. HE RECENTLY

CARRIED OFF THE DC LEADERSHIP IN MILAN AND WILL UNDOUBTEDLY FIGURE PROMINENTLY IN NEXT WEEKEND'S LOMBARDY PARTY CONGRESS. BOLSTERED BY HIS ELECTION TO PARLIAMENT IN JUNE WITH ONE OF THE HIGHEST PREFERENTIAL VOTES (OVER 150,000), DE CAROLIS IS ARTICULATE, WELL-EDUCATED, FEARLESS AND ENDOWED WITH AN AMERICAN POLITICIAN'S KNOWLEDGE OF HOW TO USE THE MEDIA.

7. ON THE OTHER HAND, WHILE DE CAROLIS FINDS READY APPEAL IN THE URBAN NORTH, HIS BRAND OF LAY, BUSINESS-CLASS CONSERVATISM HAS YET TO WIN ADHERENTS ELSEWHERE IN ITALY. HE IS STILL VERY MUCH A REGIONAL PHENOMENON. IT IS HARD TO CONCEIVE OF AN ALLIANCE, FOR EXAMPLE, BETWEEN DE CAROLIS AND THE RURAL, CONFESSIONAL CONSERVATISM REPRESENTED BY FANFANI ON THE DC'S RIGHT EVEN IF THE TWO COULD EVER RECONCILE THEIR DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED CONCEPT OF PARTY ORGANIZATION (FACTIONAL POWER VS. MASS ELECTORAL STRENGTH).

8. ONE MIGHT THEN WELL ASK, WHY THE FUSS? IN PART, THE USE OF FASCIST IMAGERY MUST HAVE TROUBLED MANY IN THE DC IN THAT IS DISTORTS AND DISCREDITS TRULY MODERATE AND DEMOCRATICALLY CONSERVATIVE POSITIONS. IN PART, THE DC LEFT, WITH VESTED INTERESTS IN THE POWER STRUGGLE NOW BEING PLAYED OUT IN MILAN, UNDOUBTEDLY WANTS TO DO DE CAROLIS IN. BUT JUST AS IMPORTANTLY, DE CAROLIS PRODUCES A KNEE-JERK REACTION IN A LARGE SEGMENT OF THE ITALIAN BODY POLITIC SIMPLY BECAUSE HE IS AN EXPONENT OF THE RIGHT. INCREASINGLY OF LATE, THE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE IN ITALY (FOSTERED BY THE MEDIA AND ENCOURAGED BY THE IDENTITY CRISES OF THE VARIOUS DEMOCRATIC PARTIES) NO LONGER TOLERATES THE DEMOCRATIC RIGHT WITHIN THE SPECTRUM OF ACCEPTABLE POLITICAL BEHAVIOR. IN ADDITION, THE LEFT IS ONLY TOO QUICK TO DEVELOP "FASCIST" STRAWMEN PARTICULARLY IF IT CAN ALSO DISCREDIT THE DC IN THE PROCESS.

9. WITHIN THE DC, "ANTI-COMMUNISM" IS UNDERSTOOD IN TERMS OF "CONFRONTO"--A DIALOG WHICH RECOGNIZES THE POLITICAL WEIGHT OF CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 ROME 19685 021740Z

THE PCI IN THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DYNAMICS OF THE COUNTRY. THE IDEA OF "SCONTRO"--ADVANCED BY DE CAROLIS (AND INDIRECTLY SUGGESTED RECENTLY BY FANFANI WITH SIMILARLY CONTROVERSIAL RESULTS) IS POLITICALLY TABOO. IN THE WORDS OF A DC LEFT LEADER (BODRATO), "TO WISH FOR HARSH CONFRONTATION IS A SIGN OF IRRESPONSIBILITY BECAUSE RADICALIZATION WILL DESTROY THE SMALL PARTIES WHICH ARE INDISPENSABLE FOR PLURALISTIC DEMOCRACY." IT IS NONETHELESS A LAMENTABLE COMMENTARY ON POLITICAL EXPRESSION IN ITALY TODAY THAT (IN THE WORDS OF COMUNIONE E LIBERAZIONE'S BURRUSO) "ANYONE NOT DISPOSED TO COLLABORATE WITH THE PCI IS AUTOMATICALLY LABELED CONSERVATIVE, REACTIONARY AND ANTI-PROGRESSIVE." SINCE THERE ARE INCREASINGLY FEWER VOICES FOR UNAMBIGUOUS POLITICAL CHOICES, IT IS A PITY THAT DE CAROLIS SHOULD PLAY INTO THE HANDS OF HIS DETRACTORS BY CLOAKING HIS MESSAGE IN TERMS THAT SUGGEST

THE LEGITIMACY OF CIOLENCE.VOLPE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ANTICOMMUNIST, NEWS MEDIA COMMENTS, PARTY LEADERS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: vogelfj
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ROME19685
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760447-0712
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761278/aaaacpxw.tel
Line Count: 170
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: vogelfj
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <08 SEP 2004 by vogelfj>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DE CAROLIS AND THE PROBLEM OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT RIGHT SUMMARY: CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT (DC) LEADERS AND THE MEDIA ALIKE HAVE SPENT THE LAST WEEK ATT ACKING MASSIMO DE CARO
TAGS: PINT, IT, PCI, CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY, (DE CAROLIS, MASSIMO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006